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THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" The total number of liquor permits issued in the South Arcot district was 29 in 1951–52 and 18 in 1952–53."

SRI M. JAGANNATHAN :—" May I know how many of the liquor permit holders are officials?"

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" The figures are not readily available, Sir."

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" What are the reasons that the Government can adduce for the reduction in the figures for liquor permits during the year 1952–53 when compared to the previous year 1951–52?"

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN :—" The hon. Member himself can infer the reasons."

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" I rise on a point of order, Sir. I ask for information and I am entitled to get the information and the Minister is bound to give the information. How can the Minister throw the burden on me and say that I can infer the reason?" 8-40 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER :—" What has the Speaker to do with the method of answering questions? He cannot ask the Minister to answer in such and such a manner. Anyway, how is the point a point of order?"

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" The point of order is this. Is the Minister entitled to evade answering a pertinent question?"

MR. SPEAKER :—" If the hon. Member thinks that the Minister is evading the question, he has a weapon in his own hands."

SRI S. DEIVASIGAMANY :—" I can understand the Hon. Minister saying that he has no information or refusing to answer by keeping quiet. But can he answer by putting another question?"

MR. SPEAKER :—" Whatever that may be, the Speaker cannot compel a Minister to answer in such and such a way. If the Members are not satisfied with an answer, they have got a weapon in their own hands."

Expenditure on purchase of slates and books by the Panchayat Board, Kankole, North Malabar.

* 949 *Q.*—SRI K. P. GOPALAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have received any request from the Panchayat Board, Kankole, North Malabar, for approving the expenditure on purchase of slates and books for the poor students studying in the Elementary Schools in the panchayat area; and

(*b*) whether the Government have sanctioned it, and if not, the reasons therefor?

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THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" (a) Yes, Sir.

" (b) The Government have not approved the expenditure. The purchase and distribution of books and slates to poor pupils is not a function of the Panchayat under the Madras Village Panchayats Act, 1950. Moreover, the Panchayat is not maintaining any Elementary or Higher Elementary Schools."

SRI K. P. GOPALAN :—" A panchayat board is intended to help the people in whatever way it could. It is the function of a panchayat board to help the people in the locality, even though the provision of such help is not provided for in the rules. If the Government are convinced that what the panchayat board has done is a right thing, will they be pleased to amend the Village Panchayats Act so as to permit the giving of such help? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Amendment of the Village Panchayats Act is quite a different thing. As it is, panchayat boards have to function within the provisions of that Act."

SRI T. C. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR :—" In Kankole, the percentage of literacy is very low. A majority of the children do not attend school for want of books, slates, etc., and the parents are not in a position to supply them with books, etc., for want of money. Is it not the duty of the Panchayat Board to see that the children are made to go to school by supplying them books, etc.? As the Panchayat Board has done a great and glorious thing, will the Government see their way to comply with the request? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Every body is expected to discharge its own functions. When it goes outside those functions, we have to take it to task. It may be a glorious or inglorious thing, but that is not the criterion."

SRI S. RAMALINGAM :—" புஸ்தகம் ஸ்லேட்டுகளை பஞ்சாயத்து போர்ட் இலவசமாக வழங்கவேண்டுமென்று சர்க்காரைக் கேட்டதற்கு அந்தத் திட்டத்திற்கு சட்டத்தில் இடம் இல்லை என்று சர்க்கார் கூறி இருக்கிறார்கள். இனியாவது அவ்வாறு ஏழை மக்களுக்கு வாங்கி இலவசமாகக் கொடுப்பதற்கு சர்க்கார் யோசிப்பார்களா ? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" A request may be made and it could be considered."

* 950 Q.—SRI T. C. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR (on behalf of Sri V. R. Krishna Ayyar) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Administration be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government have received any request from the Panchayat Board, Kankole (North Malabar), for approving an expenditure of Rs. 100 in the shape of books and slates to poor pupils in the elementary schools within the panchayat limits; and

(b) if so, whether the Government have accorded the sanction and if not, the reasons therefor?